

# The Sword & The Plow

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## The General Resurrection and The Book of Daniel

In this article we explore the general resurrection: what was it and when did it occur?

### The Five Deaths Identifiable in Scripture

In order to identify what the general resurrection was or consisted in, it will be useful to briefly survey the five deaths identifiable in scripture, so that we can safely rule out what it was not.

- 1) Moral/Spiritual death. Man was created in the image of God; he participated in the divine image and likeness by the indwelling of God's Spirit (inspiration – Heb. "neshamah", Strong's # 5397) breathed into our first ancestor at his creation (Gen. 2:7). This inspiration allowed man to rise above his carnal nature. When man sinned, he lost the indwelling of God's Spirit (neshamah). He became carnal, sold under sin. He possessed the ability to see and to choose right from wrong, but his affections so far inclined in favor of his flesh, that he was estranged from God

in his heart, and followed after his lower appetites. Paul describes this, saying, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17; cf. Rom. 7:14ff). Man's carnality is treated as a type of "death" in scripture from which man must be awakened or raised. Thus, Paul says in Ephesians "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Gal. 5:14). Here we see that moral estrangement from Christ is characterized as a type of death, from which man is raised by turning from sin to Christ.

- 2) Legal/Juridical death. This is best comprehended as the sentence handed down by God for all that commit sin (the idea of imputed sin or condemnation is unbiblical and rejected). All that sin come under the sentence of eternal death, and are

treated as dead, or as “good as dead” in contemplation of law. Paul alludes to this death when he says “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins...God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:1, 4-6). We take the phrase “dead in sins” to signify that we were under judgment of sin and the sentence and punishment of eternal death. However, unwilling that any perish, God gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins (“*Christ died for all; salvation is freely available to all; and God wants all to be saved*”). The sentence being satisfied by Jesus’ substitutionary death and atoning sacrifice, we are acquitted of guilt and “quickened” together with Christ. We thus pass from a condition of legal and juridical condemnation and death, to one of justification and life by the obedience of faith and power of Christ’s cross.

- 3) Physical death. Physical death was the result of Adam’s being bared from the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24). It is not the ultimate penalty for sin, but it is clearly one of its immediate consequences and a perquisite to eternal death: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3:19). Since physical death was the immediate doom brought in by sin, and bespoke the greater doom of eternal death that followed, it is from physical death that the promise of resurrection was given. This promise was made in veiled, poetic terms when God said that the woman’s seed would bruise the head of the serpent, signifying that Jesus would crush the power of sin and death by his cross and resurrection (Gen. 3:15). It is to physical death Martha referred when Lazarus died, saying, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection of the last day” (Jn. 11:21). The resurrection of the last day

was therefore from physical death. Similarly, it is to the physically dead the Greek collectively refers when it describes Jesus’ resurrection saying he was raised from “among the dead” (Lk. 24:46; *cf.* Acts 17:32). Jesus was the firstfruit of the general resurrection. But Jesus’ resurrection was from among the physically dead. Therefore, the general resurrection is from physical death. However, a resurrection from physical death does not imply a resurrection to physical life. Our inheritance is in heaven, where physical bodies cannot enter. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven (I Cor. 15:50, 51; *cf.* 35-44). The natural body shed at death is replaced by a spiritual body suited to ethereal realms above – immortal, intangible, and immaterial.

- 4) Hadean death. Death and Hades are closely associated in scripture. The phrase “death and Hades” occurs with some frequency in Revelation, showing that these were inseparably related (Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14; *cf.* I Cor. 15:55). Called “Sheol” in the Old Testament, Hades was to the soul or spirit of man what the grave was to the body. The soul could not enter the presence of God in heaven without the atoning sacrifice of Christ, so the dead were sequestered in Hades until the general resurrection. The righteous dwelt in a place of comfort called “paradise” or “Abraham’s bosom” (Lk. 16:23; *cf.* 23:43; II Cor. 12:4), the wicked dwelt in a place of doom and punishment called “Tartarus” (Lk. 16:23, 24; II Pet. 2:4). Jesus’ spirit was in Hades with the repentant thief after their death upon the cross (Lk. 23:43; Acts 2:27). The inherent connection in previous times between death and Hades meant that resurrection from physical death was also a resurrection from Hades. (See Rev. 20:11-15; *cf.* I Cor. 15:55.) Hadean death was the last enemy standing between the saints and entrance into the presence of God in heaven. Hadean death was done away at the general resurrection. The saints now go directly to heaven upon decease, the lost to eternal punishment.

- 5) Eternal death. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Death was the punishment annexed to sin from the very garden (Gen. 2:17). But physical death was not the ultimate consequence of sin. Rather, physical death entered because access to the tree of life was removed, lest man eat of the tree of life and live forever a sinner (Gen. 3:22-24). For the righteous, physical death held the promise of resurrection to eternal life; for the alien sinner, physical death forebodes eternal doom. Although we do not believe the soul of man is immortal (this was a Greek concept connected with the doctrine of reincarnation in which the soul was born to earthly life anew after a 1000 year sojourn in Hades), the spirit of man does survive physical death. Those who die outside of Christ are sentenced to Gehenna, also called the “lake of fire,” or “second death” (Matt. 23:33; Rev. 20:14, 15). Gehenna, or the Valley of Tophet, was a valley beyond the walls of Jerusalem. It was the place where the corpses of 185,000 Assyrians that perished before the walls of Jerusalem were buried and burned (Isa. 30:31-33; 37:36). Josephus reports that over 600,000 Jews were cast into Gehenna from the famine during the siege of Jerusalem, where their bodies were flyblown and putrefied, and eaten by kites and dogs. This is the meaning of the phrase “their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched” (Isa. 66:24; Mk. 9:44,48) *viz.*, like a garbage dump, the maggots and fires assigned to consume the wicked are never quenched, but feed continuously upon those that neglect to lay hold upon salvation.

Having reviewed the various uses made of the term “death” in scripture, it should be clear that the general resurrection consisted exclusively in resurrection from physical death and Hades. Only Hadean death was done away by the resurrection. Affirming any other “death” was done away will result in Universalism. Test it for yourself and see: if we say physical death was done away, then all men will live forever. If we say legal and juridical death was done away, then all men are justified. If we say moral and spiritual death was done away, then all men are

made holy and pure. If we say eternal death was done away, then the penalty of sin has been removed. Thus, only Hadean death was destroyed by the general resurrection. See Rev. 20:14.

### When was the Resurrection?

So much for the “what” of the general resurrection. Let’s talk about the “when.” When did the prophets say the general resurrection would occur?

It is clear that the prophets and the expectation of the Jews was that the coming of the Messiah would herald the resurrection of the dead. This was the promise made to Adam and Eve, and it was the constant theme traversing the centuries between the fall and the appearance of Christ. Hosea looks to the defeat of death when he says “I will ransom them from the power of the grave (Heb. Sheol); I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave (Heb. Sheol), I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes” (Hos. 13:14). Similarly, Isaiah says “He will swallow up death in victory” (Isa. 25:8). Both of these passages are cited by Paul with expectation of imminent fulfillment (I Cor. 15:54, 55). Thus, it would be very strange if the promise announced by the prophets that was to attend the appearance of the Messiah was still languishing 2000 years after Christ appeared! But when would this occur? And since it would transpire upon the other side of eternity, in the realm of the spirit, not this side of eternity in the realm of the flesh, how can it be known if and when it was fulfilled? The most precise time statements are provided by the prophet Daniel in his last vision.

### Daniel and the Resurrection

Daniel is a book of timelines unto the kingdom and coming of Christ. It is also a timeline unto the general resurrection. Daniel’s prophecies span four world empires that would rise and wane, and provide a gauge by which men could know when the Messiah would appear. These kingdoms, described principally in chapters 2 and 7, were Babylon, Mede-Persia, Greece, and Rome. But as Rome did not fall until A.D. 476 – long past the appearance of Christ – a second timeline of 490 prophetic years was provided to further delimit the critical period (Dan. 9:24-27). These 490 prophetic years began with the decree

to rebuild Jerusalem' walls and gates after the captivity on the one hand (454 B.C.), and concluded with the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus (A.D. 70) on the other.<sup>1</sup> The events traversing these are described in minute detail in Daniel's final vision, recorded in chapters 10-12.

The vision begins with the Persian monarchy, the rise of Alexander the Great, and the four kingdoms or divisions that rose out of his empire upon Alexander's death (Dan. 11:1-4). The period of the Greek Ptolemaic dominion in Egypt to the South and the Seleucid dominion in Syria to the North of Judea are developed at length (Dan. 11:5-20), followed by the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes and the exploits of the brothers Maccabee (Dan. 11:21-39). Dan. 11:40-45 introduces the Roman power which came to dominate the region beginning with the defeat of Antiochus III the Great at Thermopylae (191 B.C.) and Magnesia (190 B.C.), and the treaty of Ampanea (188 B.C.), but attained the greatest gains under Pompey, who defeated Mithridates, king of Pontus, followed by the conquest of Judea (63 B.C.). Julius Caesar is the king who gains control of Egypt, but "comes to his end with none to help him" (v. 45). Caesar was followed by Octavian Augustus, in whose time Christ was born into the world (Lk. 2:1). Daniel refers to appearance of the Messiah, saying, "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince that standeth for the children of thy people" (Dan. 12:1; cf. Rev. 12:7-11). The crucifixion of Christ was addressed in Dan. 9:24-27 where the Messiah was "cut off," so Daniel does not pause to repeat Christ's earthly ministry here, but rushes ahead to the "great tribulation."

*"And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at the time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:1, 2).*

Here is the resurrection of the dead, tied to the time of trouble, or "great tribulation." The great

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<sup>1</sup> There was a gap of approximately 36 years marking the period between Christ's ascension and his return.

tribulation consisted in the persecution under Nero (A.D. 64-68), the Roman civil wars that followed Nero's death (A.D. 68-70), and the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 66-70). Jesus specifically mentioned the great tribulation in the context of the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and mentions the prophecy of Daniel by name (Matt. 24:15-21). Jesus said "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. 24:34; cf. Matt. 23:34-39). Thus, the resurrection would come upon the heels of the fall of Jerusalem. The time frame established by Jesus occurs also in Daniel. Daniel did not understand the vision and asked when the things described would come to pass. The angel told him "unto a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished" (Dan. 12:7). This points to the destruction of Jerusalem at the conclusion of the 3 ½ war with Rome. This is further corroborated by reference to the cessation of the daily sacrifice and the setting up of the abomination of desolation (Dan. 12:11-13). The daily sacrifice refers to the sacrifice offered twice daily for Caesar, which the Jews rejected and which Josephus says was the "true beginning" of the war. 1290 days would transpire from the taking away of Caesar's sacrifice to the setting up the abomination of desolation (the Roman force assembled by Titus). This occurred when Titus marched from Egypt to Caesarea to assemble his forces. The 1335 days would be the 45 days more before Titus set up camp before Jerusalem during Passover, trapping over a million Jews within the city who would perish almost to a man. "All these things" would be fulfilled by the time Jerusalem was razed, including the resurrection of the dead: "But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (Dan. 12:13). Daniel would be raised at the end of the time specified, together with the rest of the dead.

Dan. 12 is the shortest and surest route to establish the time of the resurrection. In fact, the whole issue of the timing of Christ's second coming can just about be debated upon the strength of this one verse. When my friend Don Preston debated Mac Deaver here in Carlsbad in 2008, Deaver avoided any discussion of Dan. 12, despite Don's repeated attempts to get him to give us his view on the passage. Don's comment was that Deaver "didn't even breathe on it." That is, he could not be induced to offer one word by way of explanation how the resurrection

is still future when Daniel so plainly placed it the fall of Jerusalem. This same studied avoidance of Daniel 12 is true of Gentry, Mathison, Strimple, and others who, confronted with the simple truth of the time for the general resurrection, cannot square it with their preconceived ideas. In their book *“When Shall These Things Be? – A Reformed Response to Hyperpreterism”*<sup>2</sup> not one of the authors had the courage to attempt an explanation. For example, Mathison, editor of the book, affirms that Dan. 12:2 is talking about individual resurrection. Yet, when he quotes Dan. 12:5-7, which states that all these things would be fulfilled when the power of the holy people was shattered, Mathison weakly offers “the specific meaning of ‘a time, times, and half a time’ is not clear.”<sup>3</sup> But if the 3 ½ years alluded to by this verse escapes Mathison, surely the “shattering of the power of the Jews” cannot! Isn’t, rather, that Mathison’s preconceived ideas prevent him from receiving the obvious meaning of the text? James Jordan, in his commentary on Daniel, surveys no fewer than six possibilities. He says that he believes there was a resurrection (“ascension”) of Old Testaments saints to heaven to reign with Christ in AD 70, and affirms that Dan. 12:13 appears to point to that fact. However, he rejects the idea that the resurrection of Dan. 12:2 refers to A.D. 70 for no more reason than it does not square with his understanding of the Millennia in Revelation 20. Thus, the obscurities of Revelation prevent him from receiving the plain teaching of Daniel! In the end, Jordan avoids committing to any certain answer – equivocating instead that maybe a spiritualized evangelic, teaching ministry is alluded to - a clear indication that the book is closed to all who try to force it into a futurist paradigm.<sup>4</sup>

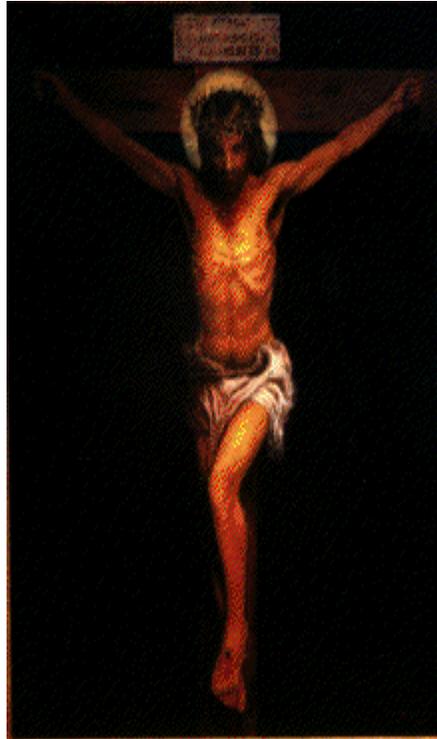
### Conclusion

The general resurrection consisted in the release of the accumulated souls in Hades. The prophets taught that the resurrection would appear with the Messiah. Daniel sets the time for the resurrection at the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70.

<sup>2</sup> P&R (2004)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 161, 164.

<sup>4</sup> James Jordan, *The Handwriting on the Wall* (American Vision, 2007), pp. 615-618.



***“God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

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## Read



## The Sword & The Plow

# Twenty-First Century America and First Century Rome

John S. Evans

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During a lifetime that has stretched far into its eighth decade, I have often run across the idea that Western Civilization in general and the United States in particular have reached a stage in their development that parallels the social rot that ultimately brought about the fall of the Roman Empire. An obvious concern among many of those who find plausibility in such a comparison is that America and those nations with which it has the closest cultural ties may be destined to yield their lofty status in the world to nations with more cultural vitality.

A major problem in comparing contemporary America with the Roman Empire is that of deciding how much of the empire's history to include in the comparison. If we follow the common practice of dating the empire's formal beginning to 27 BC, which is when Octavian Caesar received the title Augustus" from the Senate, and then use the date of the fall of Rome to "barbarians" in AD 476 as the terminal point, we are confronted with the problem of deciding how much of that period of just over 500 years should be used for the comparison. And if you elect to compare the culture of the Roman Empire of the first century of the Christian Era with that of the contemporary United States—which is what I shall be doing in this article—to suggest that such a comparison implies that the United States is sowing the seeds of its own destruction may seem absurd on its face since the empire remained intact long after the first century came to a close.

Historians generally concede that the decline of the Roman Empire visibly set in as early as the second half of the second century following the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180), but even as early as the reign of Augustus (27 BC-AD 14), the empire's institutional structure exhibited weaknesses that carried the potential for bringing

about its ultimate collapse. That the empire survived as long as it did can be attributed to its lack of well organized and powerful adversaries, its ability to keep its military machine intact, and the slow pace of social and technological change that characterized pre-medieval times.

Since twenty-first century America has powerful adversaries and exists in a social environment that features rapid change and strong political opposition to the maintenance of a powerful military establishment that can deal effectively with long-term challenges, if it shares features of incipient decay with first-century Rome, this casts doubt on its ability to duplicate Rome's staying power in the absence of profound social reforms.

A convenient starting point for the comparison of first century Rome with twenty-first century America is the observation that the "bread and circuses" of ancient Rome that have become familiar to the general public through the achievements of cinematography have their present-day counterparts in the enormous emphasis on "social" spending by government and the copious flow of entertainment provided by the mass media that is characteristic of the the United States and other nations that have attained relatively high standards of living. The percentage of the total population of the United States that is too heavily dependent upon the largesse of the state is, no doubt, far greater than was the case with the Roman Empire, but it was the city of Rome itself and the other cities of the empire that were the seats of political power; and in those cities, the mass of the population was highly dependent upon the state for its sustenance and for the leisure-time holidays and amusements that helped assure a docile populace.

A second obvious similarity between first century Rome and contemporary America is the existence of a chaotic religious environment featuring diversity of religious beliefs, widespread religious skepticism, and a declining role for religion in the culture at large. There are important differences in detail between the two cases, but there are also striking similarities. The Roman Empire contained people of many nationalities with a wide variety of religious beliefs and practices, and its rulers found it politically expedient to exhibit a generally tolerant attitude toward different forms of religious worship as long as the authority of the Roman state was not challenged. Except for the empire's sizable Jewish minority, which may well have constituted around 10 percent of its entire population in the first century, the religions practiced during the first few decades of its existence were overwhelmingly pagan; i. e. polytheistic. On the whole, popular belief that divine forces ultimately controlled the world was sufficiently strong so that the empire's rulers found it expedient to vest the Roman state and the person of the emperor with divine authority and to require that this authority be formally acknowledged by its subjects. In general, however, at least until the Jewish War of AD 66-73, this requirement was not so onerous as to give rise to serious challenges to it.

It is clear that by the first century, the hold of traditional polytheistic beliefs upon the more educated segment of the empire's population had greatly weakened. Moreover, it is also noteworthy that Judaism spread into lands under Roman control following the incorporation of Judea into Rome's domain that began with Pompey's occupation of Jerusalem in 63 BC and was solidly confirmed, after considerable turmoil, with the installation of Herod as King of the Jews in 37 BC. The growth of Judaism occurred, in part, because of conversions from paganism, which suggests the weakening of the hold of traditional beliefs on the population at large. Early Christianity's ability to win gentile converts in Rome and elsewhere also implies the weakening of traditional beliefs.

Although the United States accords religion a larger role in its affairs than is generally the norm in Europe and in other nations that have achieved relatively high levels of education and economic development, it has clearly been tending to reduce that role since about the middle of the 1960s. Its entertainment media, its

traditional news media, and its education establishment are all dominated by people with more secular worldviews than the population at large who tend to be supportive of big government. Accordingly, the overall role of government in the lives of its citizens has expanded despite the setbacks associated with the "Reagan Revolution" and the assertion of Republican dominance in Congress that lasted from the election of 1994 until the second term of George W. Bush.

In contemporary America, the diminution of the role of religion in cultural and political affairs has featured adjustments in the boundary between church and state that have shrunk the territory allowed for the unrestricted exercise of the Christian faith. This shrinkage has occurred under the influence of political currents associated with such labels as "multiculturalism," "moral relativism," "diversity," "fundamentalism," "intolerance," "racism," "Eurocentrism," and "religious right." And while the United States has proven to be more resistant to the expansion of the state's role in the lives of its citizens than most other high-income industrialized nations, this resistance has gradually eroded. Indeed, under the Obama administration, the United States seems poised to surpass a number of other such nations in such a key indicator of the role of government as total government spending as a percentage of gross domestic product.

Outright religious skepticism was not as prevalent in first century Rome as in today's America, though the empire had many residents who harbored doubts about their traditional gods. Moreover, Epicureanism, a philosophy repudiating the notion that human life is subject to divine intervention, enjoyed considerable popularity among the educated elite. But whereas the government of the United States has become thoroughly secularized, the Roman state found it tactically convenient to surround its imperial establishment with the aura of divine sanction. Thus, while the Roman authorities allowed the Jews to maintain their system of worship focused on the Temple in Jerusalem before the Jewish War, they also required the Jewish authorities to allow sacrifices at the Temple on behalf of the imperial family. On the whole, however, it remains true that first century Rome resembled contemporary America in having a social environment featuring diversity of religious beliefs, a good deal of religious skepticism, and a

declining role for religion in the conduct of cultural and governmental affairs. The religious eclecticism embraced by the Roman authorities proved effective in terms of allowing people holding different religious beliefs to live together in reasonable harmony. It also opened the door for the spread of Judaism and—a little later—the emergence of Christianity. In the post-Enlightenment environment of modern America, the political currents have operated somewhat differently, but the results have been similar. Rather than assert the claim of divine authority for itself, the state has found it expedient to substitute its own authority for that of divinity. By doing so, it has successfully adapted itself to the much more secular social environment of the twenty-first century so as to take advantage of the religious impulses that most people tend to have, by which I mean the desire of people to believe in *something*. In effect, the modern American state has become God for many of those who are under its jurisdiction; and like the Roman state of the first century, it has employed its power so as to minimize the potentially divisive potential of religious differences.

A third similarity between first century Rome and twenty-first century America is a trend toward demographic stagnation, by which I mean having a very low natural rate of population growth. Although the Roman birthrate was undoubtedly much higher than that of today's United States, so was the death rate. And while we obviously lack data on the empire's vital statistics, historians are in general agreement that its cultural environment did not encourage natural population growth. In fact, it appears to be the case that Rome's tendency toward demographic stagnation provided ample opportunities for immigrants. As for today's United States, although its birthrate still exceeds its death rate, its fertility rate is barely at the replacement level. This means that the growth of its population is largely due to net immigration and will probably tend to become even more dependent upon it as the population ages. Incidentally, in most other economically developed nations, as well as in China and in most nations that were part of the Soviet Bloc, fertility rates are below the population replacement levels, and some of these nations are actually experiencing population declines. Rome's tendency toward demographic stagnation reflected such factors as its susceptibility to plagues, its low level of medical knowledge, its lack of technological dynamism in agriculture,

the widespread existence of slavery, its violent internal conflicts, the low value that was generally placed on human life, and what I shall term the licentious lifestyles of many of its inhabitants. The causes of the demographic stagnation of the United States and many other nations today are obviously quite different, but the similarity of outcomes suggests the possibility of similar social consequences, including a dependence on immigrants to provide needed additions to the labor force. This common feature of having a large influx of immigrants can be viewed as a fourth similarity between first century Rome and twenty-first century America.

Associated with the phenomenon of immigration is a fifth similarity between first century Rome and twenty-first century America, namely the challenge to the established social order posed by the presence of a dynamic religious minority of foreign origin with a higher rate of natural population growth than the host population that resists assimilation and possesses a strong sense of being destined to dominate the world. In the case of first century Rome, this particular religious group was the Jews. In the world of today it is the adherents of Islam. Although there was a Jewish presence in lands adjacent to Judea before Pompey occupied Jerusalem in 63 BC, that land's incorporation into what soon became the Roman Empire cleared the way for an expanded migration of Jews to the north and west of their homeland. Thanks in large part to the positive influence of their faith, Jews tended to have larger and more stable families than the various pagan peoples of the empire. Moreover, although the Jews were traditionally quite patriarchal, during the period of independence before the arrival of Pompey that Judea experienced under its Hasmonean rulers, their leaders came to appreciate what could be gained by encouraging the conversion of gentiles.

Thanks to the pronouncements and teachings of their prophets, the Jews of the first century had a strong sense of their faith being destined to achieve world dominance. For many of them, this sense of destiny was interpreted to mean that they as a people had been chosen to rule over the gentiles. Inevitably, this conviction brought the Jewish nation into a conflict with the Roman authorities and the various gentile groups who lived in the same territories as some of the Jews. Moreover, the Jews' success and their resistance to assimilation stimulated resentment against

them. Some Jewish leaders sought to accommodate their nation to Roman rule so as to avoid or defer conflict, but they ultimately lost out to the Jewish nationalists who were determined to gain full independence. Simultaneously, some erosion of Jewish numbers occurred because of the emergence of Christianity.

Like the Jews of the first century, the Muslims of the twenty-first century adhere to a faith that promises world domination. Also like the Jews of ancient times, the Muslims of today are more demographically expansive than the various people with whom they are in contact and among whom they settle. And while it is true that Islam is far more committed to expansion through military conquest and forcible conversion than was generally the case with first century Judaism, it is also true that there were many Jews in those days who embraced the use of force to achieve what they considered to be their divinely promised position of dominance. Intriguingly, just as some Jewish leaders of the first century willingly cooperated with the Roman authorities prior to outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66 and encouraged those authorities to persecute the early Christians, there are Muslim activists today who ally themselves with the political left in the United States and other high-income nations in order to further dismantle the West's Judeo-Christian heritage.

While historical circumstances obviously change over time so that no two sequences of events are precisely the same, history presents broad repetitive patterns that can serve as warnings and guides to policy if they are carefully studied and correctly understood. In the particular comparison at hand, I suggest that the parallel patterns are similar enough so as to merit serious study and the consideration of their possible implications. If the world is at present in a stage of its history that is comparable to, say, the situation of the Roman Empire circa AD 50, does this suggest that we can expect a future featuring violent conflict between the adherents of Islam and the people of nations, including the United States, whose political behavior is dominated by elites who possess secularist worldviews? I am persuaded that the answer is emphatically yes! And in response to the suggestion that this pessimistic verdict overlooks the possibility of an Islamic reformation that allows the adherents of that faith to live in peace with the rest of the world, my response is that the

historic equivalent of the Protestant Reformation is unlikely to occur in Islam because the Islamic scriptures—which are regarded as being the very word of Allah—explicitly mandate world conquest and are thus understood by all of the leading schools of Islamic thought. Whereas Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the other Reformers were able to point out numerous instances in which the practices of the Catholic Church departed from biblical authority, the same option is not open to would be reformers of Islam. In short, Islam either wins or loses unless it somehow manages to thoroughly rewrite its scriptures and changes itself into a new faith.

The conflict between the militant Jews of the first century with the Roman authorities and the other people of the empire was resolved by the devastation of Judea, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the elimination of the system of worship centered on the great Temple. There was a second war between Rome and the Jews in 132-136 AD (the Bar Kokhba Revolt) that resulted in further devastation and displacement of the Jews from their historic homeland. In due course, the Jews developed a rather different system of worship (rabbinical Judaism) in which their conception of their role in the world deemphasized the notion of achieving world domination.

At the time of the Jewish War, the Roman authorities generally regarded Christianity as a Jewish sect. By the time of the Bar Kokhba Revolt, however, the separate character of Christianity and Judaism was much more obvious, and the younger faith had displaced its parent as the primary instrument for the conversion of pagans to monotheism. A reasonable conclusion is that the destruction of militant Judaism cleared the way for the growth of Christianity.

Is Islam destined to go the way of the militant Judaism that brought about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple? I am convinced that this is the likely outcome. If such is the case, will the way again be cleared for the expansion of the Christian faith? In my judgment, this, too, is likely to occur, and I suggest that the Christianity of the future may well prove to be a substantial improvement over the faith that emerged as the state religion of the Roman Empire during its further evolution.

# The Wonderful Faces of Islam

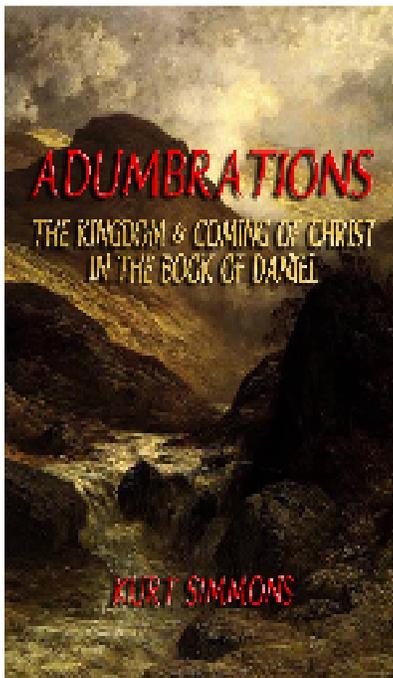
*What sort of world might we expect if these people were in charge?*



## From our Readers

Dear Mr. Simmons,

I just wanted to let you know how delighted I am to find your site. I have been visiting SGP and her sister sites and am disturbed by this whole Covenantal Eschatology & Covenant Creation business. Your articles give a good gospel defense and certainly help to give Preterism a credibility that is sorely needed. There is so much here, I will have to buy one of your books...Thank you!



*Just finished "Adumbrations" with the exceptions of the appendices. I cannot begin to imagine the amount of research you put into the project! It is very detailed and scholarly. Congratulations on a great book.*

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## The Atheistic Roots of Women's Suffrage

Possibly the single most far reaching event of the last 100 years, women's suffrage can be credited with role reversal among the sexes, the sexual revolution, the extinction of virginity, exploding illegitimate birth rate, abortion on demand, skyrocketing divorce rates, and the decline of the American family as mother's leave the home to pursue outside interests. Few realize the anti-Christian roots of women's suffrage. Here are some of the more important facts:

### **Some of the greatest opponents to woman's suffrage were women themselves.**

Woman's suffrage movement began in the mid 1800s. It took over 70 years to gain the support necessary to pass. Although proponents of woman's suffrage tried for many years to convince women they needed the vote, most women were not easily persuaded or so inclined.

Most women did not feel exploited or oppressed; and the movement for woman's suffrage had a hard time convincing them the vote would improve their lives. Many saw it as actually demeaning to the woman inasmuch as it sought to lower her to man's level. Active in charitable work, hospitals, orphanages, homes for fallen women etc., they felt no for the need for the vote to make a contribution to life. Most women, then as now, were content with the traditional arrangement of society along Christian lines.

Many also feared that enfranchisement of women would increase divorce, fornication, and disintegration of the family. Moreover, they did not feel the need to assume male roles for personal validation - another lie the feminist movement continues to teach women today. In fact, the feminist movement is actually anti-female as it seeks to validate women only insofar as they behave like men. Unless they assume males roles and are emancipated from the interdependence of the traditional home and family, the movement claims women are exploited and demeaned; the beauty of motherhood and homemaking are ridiculed; women must compete and become like men if they are to realize their true value and place in

the world, or so, at least, the "anti-feminine feminist" movement holds.

### **Churches were largely opposed to woman's suffrage.**

Churches generally tend to avoid political issues and enter the debate only when issues effecting basic Christian values are in the balance. Apparently this was one of them. State's with web-sites providing the history of suffrage in their states often record that churches were among those opposed to the movement. Churches opposed women's suffrage for all the same reasons the majority of women opposed it, but tended to rely more upon Biblical precedents. Sexual immorality and the break down of the family were typical concerns. Adolf Hult, an early 20th century Lutheran pastor claimed that "Suffragism is gripped by feminism." John Williams, an Episcopal priest in Nebraska, stated: "God meant for women to reign over the home, and most good women reject politics because woman's suffrage will destroy society." Churches favoring women's suffrage were typically very liberal, such as Unitarian, Universalist, and Quaker.

### **The suffrage movement was dominated by avowed atheists, communists, and socialists.**

This fact is often kept quietly in the background by liberals. In fact, the radical nature of those pushing for suffrage was one of the greatest impediments to its success as mainstream society - still strongly Christian - refused to have anything to do with atheists and socialists. One tract distributed in Nebraska entitled "Lest Catholic Men be Deceived" stated: "I do not believe that any Catholic men or women would favor "Votes for Women" if they realized certain facts. First, There are a million socialists in this country, and all are unanimous for woman suffrage, because they hope by the women's vote to help themselves politically. All socialists are opposed to anything Christian, but they bitterly hate and attack Catholics. Why should Catholics join themselves with such a body?" "AtheistsforPeace.net" says of the suffrage movement: "The women's movement itself was grounded fairly squarely in opposition to organized religion. As the movement grew it did take in people of all types and beliefs,

something that Susan B. Anthony was not only proud of, but fought hard for. Ms. Anthony believed that once women became educated and had control over their own lives women would shake off the "yoke of religion" in the light of reason."

Susan B. Anthony, an avowed atheist and opponent of Christianity, is probably the leading light of woman's suffrage. She is believed by some to have secretly been a communist. When William Henry Channing, a former atheist, returned to the Christian faith, Anthony exclaimed: "Do you mean to say you have returned to the belief in the immaculate conception of Jesus and in miracles...? Well, I was stunned and left...It is - it must be - simply the waning intellect returning to childish teaching."

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, an atheist and leader in the woman's suffrage movement, published "*The Woman's Bible*," a bitter and blasphemous book that declaimed against Christianity and the Bible:

"I do not believe that any man ever saw or talked with God, I don't believe that God inspired the Mosaic code, or told that historians what they say he did about woman, for all the religions on the face of the earth degrade her, and so long as woman accepts the position that they assign her, her emancipation is impossible...The Bible teaches that a woman brought sin and death into the world, that she precipitated the fall of the race, that she was arraigned before the judgment seat of Heaven, tried, condemned and sentenced. Marriage for her was to be condition of bondage, maternity a period of suffering and anguish, and in silence and subjection, she was to play the role of a dependent upon man's bounty for all her material wants, and for all the information she might desire on the vital questions of the hour, she was commanded to ask her husband at home. Here is the Bible position of woman briefly summed up."

This, of course, is completely false. The Bible and Christianity have done more to elevate women than any other religion or ideology in the world. While other cultures and religions treated women as mere chattel, the Song of Songs holds woman out as the object deeply intense, romantic love, that contemns even death if only to rejoice in its object. The New Testament holds woman out as the object of "agape" love - a self sacrificing love like Christ's, who went to the cross on behalf of his bride.

Now as then, the individuals behind the feminist movement are any thing but Christian. Many are openly avowed atheists, lesbians, and liberals

that would overthrow the foundations of Western civilization and Christendom.

We want to be careful not to seem to say that women or men in favor of women's rights today are somehow necessarily unChristian. On the other hand, it does sometimes happen that the attitudes of Christians on many vital issues effecting the home, family, and world we live in are molded by the enemy in the liberal media and education, who slant information and omit facts that might make us stop and question where our sentiments should actually lie. For example, the average school text book would never inform students (or their parents) that Susan B. Anthony was an atheist and socialist who sought to free society from "the yoke of religion," for to do so would alert parents and defeat their purpose to propagandize our children and enlist them in the cause of the unbelieving left.

Moral of the story: Christian beware! Only by sound and courageous Biblical teaching and preaching can the church retain its salt and lend this nation savor in the mouth of God.

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## **“This We Believe...”**

### **A Preterist Statement of Faith**

We believe that the scriptures are the verbally inspired word of God; not just the thoughts, but the very words themselves (*verbissima ipsi*) were chosen by God for the revelation of his will to mankind.

We believe the authenticity, historicity, inerrancy, immutability, providential preservation, transmission, and canonicity of the scriptures.

We believe that the scriptures must be interpreted according to the intent of the author (the Holy Ghost); no interpretation is valid that sets forth a meaning the author did not intend. Allowing for the customary habits and usages of speech, words are to be understood according to their literal meaning, unless the author otherwise intends.

We believe that the historical narratives of Genesis were intended to affirm the truth of the facts that they recite. We deny that the historical narratives of Genesis can be interpreted by the same principles as the poetic language and imagery of the prophets: God created the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that is in them in the space of six evenings and mornings (24 hour days); Adam and Eve were the first created human beings; all men trace their descent from the common biological parentage of Adam and Eve.

We believe all men are subject to a fallen nature, received by inheritance from man's common ancestor; that this fallen nature results from the loss of God's indwelling Spirit (inspiration) breathed into Adam at the time of his creation, and that all men are therefore subject to the carnality of their flesh, and the motions of sin in their members.

We believe that the law of sin and death is appended to every commandment of God and transgression of men. Moral law, restraining and condemning the carnality and viciousness of fallen man, has existed in every age and

generation, and has always been reckoned and punished by God. The wickedness of man brought upon the world a universal flood of which Noah and his son, his wife and his son's wives were the only survivors.

The Mosaic law entered to show man his sin that existed under the moral law; it did not create that sin. The ceremonial rites of the Mosaic law foreshadowed the redemptive work of Christ: Blood to redeem, water to cleanse, mediation to restore. The redemptive work of Christ accomplished at the cross was held in partial abeyance until the eschaton while Jesus performed the intercessory office of High Priest.

We believe in the deity, incarnation, and virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

We believe in the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

We believe in the substitutionary death and atoning blood of Jesus. Christ's death triumphed over the law of sin and death, and relinquished the debt and bond of sin for all that believe and obey the gospel. Men must come to salvation one by one through the obedience of faith.

The cross alone changes man's standing before the throne and is complete in itself for man's salvation. The law of Moses was impressed with no especial power of sin and death not extant in the moral law binding all men today. Christ died to save man from the bondage of sin under law of sin and death, not the Mosaic law; annulment of the

ceremonial law was irrelevant in terms of accomplishing man's salvation; removal of the Mosaic law was not necessary to defeat sin and death.

We believe the events normally associated with Christ's second coming were accomplished in the events culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The eschaton was a time of world-wide judgment for the disobedience of man in rejecting the gospel and persecuting Christ's church.

The destruction of Jerusalem had no significance beyond Christ's vengeance upon the sinful nation, a sign of heaven's reprobation of the temple service, and vindication of Christ's divine kingdom and sonship.

The last enemy was Hadean death, which kept the soul of man from the presence of God in heaven. Sin was defeated in Christ's cross, but Hadean death remained to be defeated until the intercessory work of Christ was accomplished in heaven, at which time Christ descended to vindicate his gospel, avenge his saints, and raise the dead (*viz.*, A.D. 67-70).

The resurrection consists in the spirit or soul of man, not his flesh or physical body. The general resurrection consisted in the release of all souls from Hades, which was then destroyed. At death, the souls of men now go directly to their respective rewards – eternal life in heaven, or destruction of the soul in Hell.